

Message Text

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UNCLAS STATE 298147 TOSEC 120187

FOR CARTER FROM PA

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TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT NEW YORK TIMES FRONT-PAGE BY-LINER, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, HEADED "ISRAELI INTERVIEWED."
2. JERUSALEM, DEC. 13--PRIME MINISTER MENAHEM BEGIN SAID TODAY THAT EGYPT AND ISRAEL WOULD PRESENT DRAFTS FOR PROPOSED PEACE TREATIES WHEN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS OPEN IN CAIRO TOMORROW.
3. HE SAID THAT AN AGENDA HAD BEEN WORKED OUT FOR 10 DAYS OF NEGOTIATIONS ON GENERAL ASPECTS OF PEACE AND UNCLASSIFIED

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SPECIFIC CLAUSES THAT WOULD NOT DEAL WITH THE MOST SENSITIVE ISSUES OF TERRITORY AND THE PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN ARABS.

4. THEN, MR. BEGIN CONTINUED IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE NEW YORK TIMES, THE TALKS WILL BE RECESSED FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON AND WILL BE RECONVENED, PROBABLY AT FOREIGN-MINISTER LEVEL IN CAIRO OR WHEREVER PRESIDENT ANWAR EL-SADAT PROPOSES.

5. IT HAS BEEN AGREED, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID, THAT TERRITORIAL ISSUES WILL BE HANDLED BY FOREIGN MINISTERS.

6. THE PALESTINIAN ARAB PROBLEM, HE SAID--EMPHASIZING THAT JEWS ARE ALSO PALESTINIANS AND THAT THE LANGUAGE USED "IS VERY IMPORTANT"--IS "ON THE AGENDA" BUT DOES NOT BELONG IN A TREATY.

7. "WE WANT TO SOLVE IT," MR. BEGIN SAID. "WE SHALL HAVE A PROPOSAL. MY MIND IS ACTIVE ON IT. I CAN'T EXPLAIN THE PLAN NOW, BUT IT WON'T BE TOO LONG."

8. BUT HE SAID HE KNEW, ON THE BASIS OF "FACTS," THAT THE ARABS ARE "NOT GOING TO PROPOSE PARTITION" BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS OF THE WEST BANK OF THE JORDAN, THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY FROM WHICH THE ARABS HAVE DEMANDED A COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL.

9. INDIRECTLY, THE PRIME MINISTER SEEMED TO CONFIRM REPORTS THAT SECRET TALKS HAVE BEEN GOING ON BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL SINCE MR. SADAT'S VISIT TO ISRAEL THREE WEEKS AGO. IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION, HE SAID IT UNCLASSIFIED

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WOULD BE NORMAL FOR "PRIVATE TALKS--LET'S NOT CALL THEM SECRET," TO GO ON DURING THE FORMAL CONFERENCE, AND NOT NECESSARILY IN EGYPT.

10. HE SAID THAT BASED ON HIS "KNOWLEDGE OF FACTS," HE THOUGHT THERE WERE "GOOD CHANCES" NOW FOR PEACE AND THAT HE HAD "REASON TO BE OPTIMISTIC." PEACE TREATIES SHOULD BE SIGNED "IN A MATTER OF MONTHS," HE SAID. "I WON'T SAY HOW MANY MONTHS, BUT NOT YEARS. WE WOULD LIKE WEEKS, BUT THERE IS CHRISTMAS AND PEOPLE WANT TO ADJOURN ON DEC. 23--THEY WILL START AGAIN IN JANUARY."

11. MR. BEGIN SPOKE IN HIS SMALL INFORMAL OFFICE AT PARLIAMENT. HE WAS ELATED, CHATTY AND VERY CORDIAL. THOUGH HE SEEMED TO HAVE A SLIGHT COLD, HE REMARKED: "WHY SHOULDN'T I BE IN A GOOD MOOD? I FEEL WELL."

12. RECOUNTING HIS TALKS WITH MR. SADAT IN JERUSALEM, HE SAID WITH AN AIR OF STILL FINDING IT HARD TO BELIEVE: "WE STRUCK UP A FRIENDSHIP. WE HAD VERY INTERESTING IMPORTANT TALKS. OF COURSE, WE TALKED ABOUT SERIOUS MATTERS, BUT THE TIME WAS VERY SHORT."

13. HE CONFIRMED THAT BOTH HE AND FOREIGN MINISTER MOSHE DAYAN ASKED MR. SADAT TO STAY ON ANOTHER DAY TO CONTINUE THE TALKS, BUT DENIED THAT THERE WAS ANY INTENTION OF TRYING TO PERSUADE THE EGYPTIAN LEADER TO

SIGN A SEPARATE PEACE TREATY.

14. "IT WAS ENTIRELY UNCONNECTED WITH ANY SUCH IDEA," HE SAID. "WE WANT A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT, A GENERAL PEACE WITH ALL OUR NEIGHBORS. WE NEVER SUGGESTED A SEPARATE PEACE TO SADAT; IT NEVER OCCURRED TO US."

15. THE DRAFT TREATY THAT ISRAEL HAS DRAWN UP FOR SUBMISSION TO EGYPT WAS WORKED OUT AT THE REQUEST OF UNCLASSIFIED

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SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS R. VANCE, MR. BEGIN SAID. "HE ASKED ME WHEN HE WAS HERE IN AUGUST, IN DAYAN'S GARDEN IN TEL AVIV (WHERE THE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER GAVE A RECEPTION FOR MR. VANCE) TO PREPARE A DRAFT. HE SAID HE WAS ASKING ALL THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED, SO WE DID IT IN A FEW WEEKS AND SENT IT TO HIM.

16. THEN, WHEN MR. SADAT CAME TO VISIT, MR. BEGIN SAID HE TOLD THE EGYPTIAN LEADER ABOUT THE ISRAELI DRAFT. "I GAVE IT TO HIM IN THE CAR GOING TO LYDDA, IN A DOSSIER. IT IS A FINE DOCUMENT," THE PRIME MINISTER SAID, USING THE OLD ARABIC NAME FOR ISRAEL'S BEN-GURION INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. THE TOWN HAS BEEN RENAMED LOD.

17. BUT MR. BEGIN SAID HE DID NOT LEARN THAT EGYPT HAD ALSO PREPARED ITS OWN DRAFT TREATY UNTIL MR. VANCE CAME HERE AGAIN AND SPOKE WITH HIM SUNDAY. HE HAS NOT BEEN INFORMED, HE SAID, WHETHER ANY OTHER OF THE ARAB COUNTRIES BORDERING ISRAEL HAD ALSO DRAFTED A TREATY.

18. THE AGENDA FOR THE FIRST STAGE OF THE CAIRO TALKS, HE SAID, WILL BE TO COMPARE THE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI DRAFTS AND TO "DISCUSS ALL THE PRINCIPLES."

19. "WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO AGREE ON LOTS OF CHAPTERS, LOTS OF SECTIONS," HE SAID, POINTING OUT THAT THE ISRAELI DRAFT DEALS WITH ENDING THE STATE OF WAR, ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND ALSO DEALING WITH TOURISM, NAVIGATION IN INTERNATIONAL WATERWAYS AND SIMILAR ISSUES.

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20. WHEN THE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEET, HE SAID, ISRAEL WILL PRODUCE A MAP FOR DISCUSSION OF THE TERRITORIAL QUESTION AND "IT WILL BECOME AN ANNEX TO THE TREATY."

21. THE TREATY WITH EGYPT IS A "MODEL" FOR SIMILAR TREATIES WITH LEBANON, SYRIA AND JORDAN, ISRAEL'S OTHER NEIGHBORS, HE SAID, "OF COURSE WITH APPROPRIATE CHANGES." BUT HE SAID IT COULD SERVE AS "THE BASIS" FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE OTHERS.

22. "TAKE LEBANON AS AN EXAMPLE," HE SAID. "THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO TERRITORIAL PROBLEM WITH LEBANON. THE BORDER IS A REALITY. BUT AS TALLEYRAND SAID--IT IS OBVIOUS, AND WRITTEN DOWN IT WILL BE MORE OBVIOUS."

23. HE LAUGHED AT HIS LITTLE JOKE, MAKING CLEAR THAT THERE WOULD ALSO BE A TREATY MAP ANNEX FOR LEBANON.

24. ON JORDAN, HE SAID, "I HOPE JORDAN" WILL SOON JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT NOTED KING HUSSEIN'S DIFFICULT POSITION BECAUSE OF HIS "ALIGNMENT" NOW WITH SYRIA.

25. ON SYRIA, MR. BEGIN SAID: "AS OF TWO HOURS AGO, SYRIA'S ATTITUDE IS ONE OF COMPLETE NEGATION."

26. HOWEVER, EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS IN CAIRO SAID AT THE END OF THE WEEK THAT THEY HAD HEARD THAT PRESIDENT HAFEZ AL-ASSAD MIGHT BE WILLING TO JOIN LATER IF THE TALKS MOVED AWAY FROM CAIRO. THE POSSIBILITY OF BROADER PARTICIPATION SEEMED TO BE (SIC) UNDERLINE THE UNCERTAINTY AT THIS STAGE AS TO WHERE THE JANUARY ROUND OF MEETINGS WILL BE HELD. MR. BEGIN SAID ISRAEL WOULD TALK WHEREVER MR. SADAT PROPOSES, "IN RAMAT GAN (A SUBURB OF TEL AVIV) GENEVA, WHEREVER."

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27. HE ALSO SAID HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO MEET PRESIDENT ASSAD, "IN DAMASCUS OR JERUSALEM."

28. "AKLAN WA SAKLAN," THE PRIME MINISTER SAID WITH A BIG GRIN AND TURNED TO YEHIEL KADASHAI, THE DIRECTOR OF HIS BUREAU, ASKING WITH AN ALMOST BOYISH EXPRESSION, "IS THAT ALL RIGHT?" REFERRING TO HIS PRONUNCIATION OF THE WORDS FOR "WELCOME" IN ARABIC. MR. BEGIN MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WAS TRYING TO IMPROVE HIS ARABIC PRONUNCIATION.

29. THE ONLY MOMENT IN THE INTERVIEW, WHICH LASTED NEARLY AN HOUR, THAT BROUGHT A SIGN OF EMBARRASSMENT AND LACK OF EASE FROM THE OTHERWISE EUPHORIC, BOUNCY PRIME MINISTER CAME WHEN HE WAS ASKED WHETHER HE STILL HELD TO HIS OFTEN REPEATED POSITION ON ISRAEL'S "HISTORIC RIGHTS IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA," AS HE AND OTHER ISRAELIS HAVE TAKEN TO CALLING THE WEST BANK OF THE

JORDAN RIVER. -

30. "I STAND ON MY PRINCIPLES," HE SAID WITH A SIGN, SQUIRMING SLIGHTLY IN HIS CHAIR. ASKED TO RESTATE THEM, HE DECLINED SAYING: "THEY ARE SO WELL KNOWN, I SHOULDN'T ELABORATE ON THEM."

31. HE WENT ON TO SAY: "WE ARE GOING TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY ON A PEACE TREATY. LET'S MAKE IT AS EASY AS POSSIBLE, NOT TO ANY EXTENT MORE DIFFICULT."

32. THEN THERE WAS A PAUSE, AND WITH A GRAVE EXPRESSION HE ADDED, "MY PRINCIPLES ARE MY PRINCIPLES."

33. IT WAS POINTED OUT TO MR. BEGIN THAT IN MR. UNCLASSIFIED

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SADAT'S MOST RECENT INTERVIEWS, THE EGYPTIAN LEADER HAD AVOIDED MENTIONING A "PALESTINIAN STATE" AND HAD INSTEAD BEEN SPEAKING OF A "PALESTINIAN ENTITY" AND "A HOMELAND." HE WAS ASKED WHETHER THE FACT THAT HE HAS NOT BEEN REFERRING TO ISRAEL'S "HISTORIC RIGHTS" LATELY WAS MEANINGFUL.

34. "IT DEPENDS WHAT YOU MEAN BY THE WORD MEANINGFUL," HE SAID. "OUR PRINCIPLES STAND."

35. BUT HE SHOWED SURPRISE AT MR. SADAT'S NEW VOCABULARY, SAYING, "NO, ENTITY AND HOMELAND ARE THE WORDS PRESIDENT CARTER USES." -

36. WHEN HE WAS ASSURED THAT MR. SADAT HAD ADOPTED THEM AND HAS NOT BEEN MENTIONING A "STATE," MR. BEGIN SAID WITH INTEREST, "WELL, A STATE WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE."

37. ON THE ISSUE OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN NEGOTIATIONS, MR. BEGIN DENIED CAIRO REPORTS THAT AGREEMENT ON A LIST OF PEOPLE NOT IN THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION HAD ALREADY BEEN REACHED. HE SAID NO NAMES HAD BEEN FORMALLY SUBMITTED TO ISRAEL,

NOT EVEN OF AMERICAN PROFESSORS OF PALESTINIAN ORIGIN WHOM MR. SADAT PUBLICLY SUGGESTED AS POSSIBLE REPRESENTATIVES.

38. "THE P.L.O. IS ABSOLUTELY EXCLUDED," HE SAID, BUT REPEATED HIS STATEMENT THAT ISRAEL ACKNOWLEDGED "THE PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN ARABS," AND THAT "WE WANT TO SOLVE IT. WE WILL HAVE A PROPOSAL."

39. SUCH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT HAS BEEN ONE OF MR. SADAT'S

MAJOR AIMS, AND HE HAS DEFINED HIS REQUIREMENT FOR A
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"COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT" AS MEANING ISRAELI ACCEP-
TANCE OF THE "PRINCIPLES" OF TERRITORIAL WITHDRAWAL
AND SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, ADDING THAT HE
WOULD NOT NEGOTIATE ACTUAL BORDERS FOR SYRIA OR JORDAN.

40. LAST SATURDAY, AFTER HE HAD SEEN MR. VANCE, MR.
SADAT DEFINED THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM AS "THE NEED FOR
AN ENTITY AND THE ISSUE OF REFUGEES."

41. ASKED ABOUT REFUGEES, MR. BEGIN SAID: "THERE ARE
ARAB REFUGEES AND JEWISH REFUGEES, AND THE PROBLEM
SHOULD BE SOLVED IN A HUMANE WAY. IT IS NOT ON THE
AGENDA (FOR THE FIRST PHASE OF TALKS) BUT WE WILL
HAVE A PROPOSAL" WHEN THE TIME COMES.

42. THE PRIME MINISTER URGED THAT HE SHOULD NOT BE
PRESSED NOW TO DISCUSS FUTURE ISRAELI PROPOSALS BE-
CAUSE "THESE ARE DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS." WE ARE NOT
DRAGGING OUR FEET," HE SAID, BUT MORE TIME IS NEEDED
FOR DIFFICULT ISSUES.

43. THE FIRST MEETING IN CAIRO "IS NOT THE TIME OR
THE LEVEL" TO GO INTO THE CRUCIAL QUESTIONS OF TER-
RITORY AND THE PALESTINIANS, HE SAID. BUT HE SOUGHT
TO CONVEY THE IMPRESSION THAT ISRAEL WOULD BE READY
TO OFFER SOLUTIONS WHEN THE TIME CAME AND THIS SEEMED
TO IMPLY A WILLINGNESS TO MAKE CONCESSIONS.

44. 4 SAUDI ARABIA, MR. BEGIN SAID IT WAS HIS UNDER-
STANDING THAT THE SAUDIS HAD NOT YET TAKEN A "DEFINITIVE
POSITION" ON PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. MR. SADAT AND KING
HUSSEIN HAVE RECENTLY SAID THEY HAD THE SAME INFORMA-
TION ABOUT THE ATTITUDE OF THE SAUDIS.
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45. WHEN THE QUESTION OF INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES WAS
BROUGHT UP, MR. BEGIN REPEATED THE ISRAELI STAND
AGAINST SUCH GUARANTEES, SAYING THE COUNTRY WAS

DETERMINED TO PROVIDE ITS OWN SECURITY AND THAT "THERE
IS NO WAY TO GUARANTEE THE GUARANTEE OF AN INTERNATION-
AL GUARANTEE." "WE WANT BORDERS, SECURITY, PER-
MANENT FRONTIERS," HE ADDED.

47. HE TOLD A LONG STORY ABOUT JEWS WHO HAD SPECIAL
PROTECTED STATUS FROM SLOVAK PRINCES IN THE MIDDLE
AGES, AND HE USED AN OLD GERMAN PHRASE, "JUDENSCHUTZ,"

MEANING "PROTECTION OF JEWS." WE DON'T WANT TO BE PROTECTED JEWS AND WE DON'T WANT TO BE A JUDENSCHUTZ-STAAT, A PROTECTED STATE," HE SAID.

48. BUT WHEN HE WAS REMINDED THAT MR. SADAT HAD SAID RECENTLY THAT EGYPT WANTED INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES, MR. BEGIN SAID:

49. "WELL, IF THEY WANT IT WE WON'T OPPOSE. I JUST WANT TO MAKE CLEAR WE ARE NOT ASKING FOR IT."

50. THE ONLY POINTS ON WHICH MR. BEGIN MADE FIRM STATEMENTS OF REJECTION OF LONGSTANDING ARAB DEMANDS WERE THAT THERE COULD BE NO PALESTINIAN ARAB STATE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JORDAN, AND THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT DEAL WITH THE P.L.O. ON EVERYTHING ELSE, HE PLEADED FOR PATIENCE, SAYING THAT ISRAEL'S POSITION WOULD BE MADE KNOWN IN FUTURE PROPOSALS.

51. WHILE HE REFUSED TO DIVULGE THE FACTS ON WHICH HE SAID HIS OPTIMISM WAS BASED, HE SEEMED GENUINELY CONVINCED THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF PEACE HAS BECOME SERIOUS AND HE AVOIDED HIS CUSTOMARY ARGUMENTS FOR A HARD-
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LINE ISRAELI STAND.

52. HE DID NOT EVEN REPEAT HIS RECENT ASSERTIONS ABOUT BEING EAGER TO GO TO CAIRO IN RETURN FOR MR. SADAT'S VISIT. BUT HE SAID IN REPLY TO A QUESTION THAT HE COULD ENVISAGE NEGOTIATIONS REACHING A POINT WHERE LEADERS WOULD NEED TO MEET.

53. THROUGHOUT MR. BEGIN SHOWED A CONCERN FOR MR. SADAT'S PERSONAL SUSCEPTIBILITIES AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS AND A HAPPY EXCITEMENT AT THE WAY THE SITUATION HAS BEEN DEVELOPING. CHRISTOPHER

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